

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Jody C. Bishop on 8/23/11.

The application has been amended as follows: Claims 2-7, 9-13, 29-37, 39-42 are cancelled.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 15-22 and 38 are allowed.
3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance. None of the prior art of record either individually or in combination teach the following:

-providing multiple postage meters, and exchanging information between them to control the postage evidencing by a user.

The present invention discloses a system for controlling postage usage. The allowable feature of providing multiple postage meters, and exchanging information between them to control the postage evidencing by a user is not disclosed by any prior art reference. The closest prior art, Lee et al (US 5,742,683) shows a system and method for managing multiple users with different privileges in an open metering system. The next closest prior art, Liechti et al (US 5715164) discloses a system and

method for communications with postage meters, where a host computer may collect statistical data from each meter, and may impose a cumulative postage amount limit, a time limit and/or a piece limit on the meter. The next closest prior art, Manduley (US 20040098354 A1) discloses a method and system for conveying funds and secure information between secure devices, including meters. Newly cited art, Cordery (US 20030144972 A1) discloses a system and method for controlling a postage metering system using data required for printing, which include both user and meter parameters. The next newly closest prior art, Brand (EP 09926632A2) discloses a system and method for evidencing postage payment where multiple meters are involved. However, Lee et al, Liechti et al, Manduley, Cordery and Brand all fail to disclose the feature of providing multiple postage meters, and exchanging information between them to control the postage evidencing by a user. This distinct feature has been added to independent claim 15, and renders it and all claims that depend from it allowable.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Akiba K Robinson-Boyce whose telephone number is 571-272-6734. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the •Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system, Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-3900.

A. R. B.
August 25, 2011

/Akiba K Robinson-Boyce/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3628